

**CLAIMS:**

What is claimed is:.

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1. A method in a network data processing system for distributed computing, the method comprising:

accepting a task for distributed computing;

10 sending work units to a plurality of data processing systems on a network, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an  
15 operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units; and

receiving results from the plurality of data processing systems.

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2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

assigning each of the plurality of data processing systems to a different user.

25 3. The method of claim 1, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems is in a different location.

4. A method in a data processing system for distributed  
30 computing, the method comprising:

executing a worker application for a selected period of time, wherein the worker application accepts a request

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and processes the request to form a result, and returns the result; and

monitoring the data processing system for compliance with a policy requiring execution of the worker

5 application for a selected period of time and a presence of a connection to a network.

5. The method of claim 4 further comprising:

preventing use of the data processing system if the  
10 policy is unmet.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the power supply to a processor in the data processing system is cut off to prevent use of the data processing system.

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7. A method in a data processing system for distributed computing, the method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

receiving a request for a computer from a user; and  
20 initiating shipping of the computer to the user, wherein the computer includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy  
25 requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising:

adding the user to a database, wherein the database  
30 identifies all users with computers containing the software.

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9. The method of claim 8 further comprising:  
receiving a task;  
assigning work units for the task to users in the  
database to form a set of assigned users;  
5 sending the work units to the set of assigned users.
10. The method of claim 7 further comprising:  
billing the user a reduced price for the computer.
- 10 11. The method of claim 7, wherein the initiating step  
includes sending an electronic message to a shipping  
company to deliver the computer to the user.
12. A data processing system comprising:  
15 a bus system;  
a communications unit connected to the bus system;  
a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the  
memory includes as set of instructions; and  
a processing unit connected to the bus system,  
20 wherein the processing unit executes the set of  
instructions to accept a task for distributed computing;  
send work units to a plurality of data processing systems  
on a network, wherein each data processing system within  
the plurality of data processing systems includes a  
25 software for accepting a work unit, processing the work  
unit to generate a result, and returning the result,  
wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an  
operation policy requiring a connection to the network  
and allocating a period of time for processing work  
30 units; and receive results from the plurality of data  
processing systems.

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13. A data processing system comprising:  
a bus system;  
a communications unit connected to the bus system;  
a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the  
5 memory includes as set of instructions; and  
a processing unit connected to the bus system,  
wherein the processing unit executes the set of  
instructions to execute a worker application for a  
selected period of time, wherein the worker application  
10 accepts a request and processes the request to form a  
result, and returns the result; and monitor the data  
processing system for compliance with a policy requiring  
execution of the worker application for a selected period  
of time and a presence of a connection to a network.
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14. A data processing system comprising:  
a bus system;  
a communications unit connected to the bus system;  
a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the  
20 memory includes as set of instructions; and  
a processing unit connected to the bus system,  
wherein the processing unit executes the set of  
instructions to receive a request for a computer from a  
user; and initiate shipping of the computer to the user,  
25 wherein the computer includes a software for accepting a  
work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result,  
and returning the result, wherein the software is  
monitored for compliance with an operation policy  
requiring a connection to the network and allocating a  
30 period of time for processing work units.

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15. A data processing system for distributed computing, the data processing system comprising:

accepting means for accepting a task for distributed computing;

5 sending means for sending work units to a plurality of data processing systems on a network, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result,  
10 and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units; and

receiving means for receiving results from the  
15 plurality of data processing systems.

16. The data processing system of claim 15 further comprising:

assigning means for assigning each of the plurality  
20 of data processing systems to a different user.

17. The data processing system of claim 15, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems is in a different location.

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18. A data processing system for distributed computing, the data processing system comprising:

executing means for executing a worker application for a selected period of time, wherein the worker  
30 application accepts a request and processes the request to form a result, and returns the result; and

monitoring means for monitoring the data processing

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system for compliance with a policy requiring execution of the worker application for a selected period of time and a presence of a connection to a network.

- 5 19. The data processing system of claim 18 further comprising:

preventing means for preventing use of the data processing system if the policy is unmet.

- 10 20. The data processing system of claim 19, wherein the power supply to a processor in the data processing system is cut off to prevent use of the data processing system.

21. A data processing system for distributed computing,  
15 the data processing system comprising:

receiving means for receiving a request for a computer from a user; and

- initiating means for initiating shipping of the computer to the user, wherein the computer includes a  
20 software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work  
25 units.

22. The data processing system of claim 21 further comprising:

- adding means for adding the user to a database,  
30 wherein the database identifies all users with computers containing the software.

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23. The data processing system of claim 22, wherein the receiving means is a first receiving means and further comprising:

second receiving means for receiving a task;

5 assigning means for assigning work units for the task to users in the database to form a set of assigned users;

sending means for sending the work units to the set of assigned users.

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24. The data processing system of claim 21 further comprising:

billing means for billing the user a reduced price for the computer.

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25. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for distributed computing, the computer program product comprising:

20 first instructions for accepting a task for distributed computing;

second instructions for sending work units to a plurality of data processing systems on a network, wherein each data processing system within the plurality of data processing systems includes a software for  
25 accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network and allocating a period of time for processing work units;  
30 and

third instructions for receiving results from the plurality of data processing systems.

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26. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for distributed computing, the computer program product comprising:

- 5       first instructions for executing a worker application for a selected period of time, wherein the worker application accepts a request and processes the request to form a result, and returns the result; and  
          second instructions for monitoring the data  
10   processing system for compliance with a policy requiring execution of the worker application for a selected period of time and a presence of a connection to a network.

27. A computer program product in a computer readable  
15   medium for distributed computing, the computer program product comprising:

- first instructions for receiving a request for a computer from a user; and  
          second instructions for initiating shipping of the  
20   computer to the user, wherein the computer includes a software for accepting a work unit, processing the work unit to generate a result, and returning the result, wherein the software is monitored for compliance with an operation policy requiring a connection to the network  
25   and allocating a period of time for processing work units.

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